teachers in the people's school, and none can bear more eloquent testimony to the sad results of physical and mental deterioration. Here and there a devoted man or woman essays to begin at the beginning and tries to give a right and true perception of fundamental truths, in one case at least within the knowledge of the writer, with disastrous results to himself, arising from prejudiced local opinion and the want of support from the Authority under which he served.

Such a subject requires such cautious handling, and must be so carefully and gradually led up to, that I can see no prospect, in view of the little spare time left to the teacher in an already crowded time-table, of its being incorporated in the school curriculum.

It is possible that something may be done in an incidental way to which, however, one can attach but little importance.

HOW THE DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING EUGENICS MAY BE OVERCOME.

By MR. J. H. BADLEY
(Headmaster of Bedale's School, Petersfield).

WE are probably all agreed as to the difficulty of teaching eugenics, or, if I may be allowed to substitute a name of rather narrower import, which expresses more nearly what I regard as the subject of my contribution to this discussion, I would rather say of teaching sex-hygiene in the school. The difficulty is there: the only question is how is it to be overcome? For as to the need to face and overcome it, there are not, I hope, two opinions about that. We all know that, if the facts are not learnt in the right way, they will be learnt in the wrong; or, worse still, not the facts themselves, but some distorted and degraded view of them from which perhaps they may never afterwards be entirely freed. Even to risk this is a crime alike against the child and against the race. I shall not therefore stop to discuss whether sex-hygiene ought to be taught to children, but only can it be taught? and if it can, then how?

First, then, can eugenics, in this sense, be taught at school at all? I must say at once that, so far as the elementary school is concerned, I have no right to attempt to answer the question.

All my experience has been gained under quite different conditions; and while I believe that something can be done in the elementary school, and still more in connection with continuation classes, all that I have to say must be understood as applying rather to the problems of secondary education, and most of all, as will be evident, to those of the boarding-school, though, I think, not inapplicable to the day school also. There are two kinds of teaching: the one, as a lesson to be learnt by heart—or at least by head. The other as a habit, the power of doing something, to be learnt only by practice. If by eugenics we understand—as I hope we do—not merely the best means of *breeding*, but rather the best means of *growing* human beings, then whether or not school is the place for the first kind of teaching of this subject—the method of head-learning—it must most certainly be the place for the second kind of teaching it, the method of practice. It must be a place where children are put in the right conditions for growing, so that, while there, they will be forming sound habits of body and habits of thought. From this point of view, questions of food, of clothing, of hours of work and play and sleep, of fresh air to breathe, both actually and metaphorically, of undraped statues and bathing naked and unashamed, are not by any means small matters. We must make children feel that personal habits and bodily functions are not to be neglected or despised. All this is largely a matter of surroundings, of school arrangements and traditions, and of time-table, and its influence is none the less for being largely unconscious; but we shall be missing an opportunity if we let children leave school without coming to see the meaning and purpose of it all. And of all such conditions of sound growth, I should, for my own part, put first the upbringing of the two sexes together. I believe that we shall come to see that co-education is an essential part of eugenics, as being at once an essential condition of normal growth, the best of safeguards against the dangers of adolescence, and the best of preparations for the difficulties of mature life; but if I once begin enlarging on this aspect of the question, I shall never get back to what else I want to say, so I will leave it as an expression of personal conviction, to be followed up or not by others.

But what of the other kind of teaching—the head-learning of eugenics? Well, I am not one of those who want to see it put, any more than morals, on the time-table as a class-subject. Of direct teaching, given in class, I don't think there can be much. If there is a place for plant-physiology in the science course, a good deal can be done there. The reproduction of plants is at once a fascinating study, quite possible with classes of all ages, separate or mixed, and also one of the best introductions to further discussion of sex and its meaning which, personally, I don't think can, as a rule, be wisely attempted in class. I say *one* of the best introductions, for if the school has, as every school should have, some living things under the charge of the children, whether kept as pets or for use, the breeding of them affords a still better means of bringing, quite simply and naturally, the main facts of sex into children's consciousness; and if in addition some study of embryology, in the different stages of the development of an egg, can be carried on by the older, this will help more than anything to bring in the detached and scientific attitude of mind towards the subject that is necessary if it is to be treated frankly, and above all if it is to be treated in class.

But, as I said, the range of any such class-teaching seems to me to be very limited. Something can be done indirectly, through the medium of history—including, as it ought to include, some course of civics—and through literature, and any kind of nature-study. All this will help to give the mental background that we need, and the right attitude of thought. But alone it is not enough. There are many, I know, who feel that this is all we can attempt. I am not one of them. I feel strongly that unless we have done more than this we have not done our duty to the child. But I feel no less strongly that whatever more we can do must be done as a personal matter between ourselves and the child alone, not, except within the limits above mentioned, as a class subject, nor yet by means of books or sermons. There are lessons that we want the child to learn, not as so much head-knowledge, but, in the true sense, by heart, and it is to the heart as well as the head that we must

address them. It needs the bond of personal confidence, the thing spoken as between friends, that can hardly be attained except in personal talk. I know that, given the conditions under which much of our school work is carried on, this may seem an impossible counsel of perfection. If so, it is these conditions that need alteration, for until we can do this for all our children the school's work is not done. I know that many will urge that this is requiring from the school an impossible task that is really the duty of the parents and the home. But even if all parents were willing to undertake it—and we know how far this is from being the case—not all are able, not all—far from it—have the requisite knowledge or insight or experience. So if we are to ensure its being done, it must be done at school; and even if the conditions do not make it easy, we must try to make it possible. If a walk, or a talk beside the fireside, is out of reach, we must find ten minutes in a class-room before or after school. Once we recognise the need, in this, as in other things, we can find the way.

But what should be said? At what age is it best to speak? How should the subject be treated? It is to practical questions like these that I want to attempt some kind of answer, or suggestions rather towards the answer that each teacher must make for himself.

What should be said must, of course, depend upon the age of the child to whom one speaks. The first thing to realise, I am quite sure, is that one can't begin too young. *There* is, of course, the work of the home. If only the mother would answer the child's questions from the first with sympathy and truth, and as freely as the child's stage of development will allow; and if she would make use of any occasion that the home offers of speaking in this way of any of the facts of sex, our work would be half done, and that the larger half, for then all knowledge of the subject would seem to the child as natural and normal as of any other, and, more important still, it would be associated with his best and deepest feelings. That is the first thing we must do, to try and get parents, and especially mothers, to realise their responsibility in the matter, and the golden opportunities of early childhood. But what I am here

concerned with is the work that, whether this is done or not, remains for the school to do. There are two occasions in the school life of a child who goes through the secondary school which should, I think, be made for speaking about this subject. First, unless one can be *sure* that the parents have done so before he comes—in the absence of a common pronoun you must let me say "he" without supposing that I necessarily limit what I say to boys only—such an occasion should be found as soon as possible after his coming; by which I mean as soon as he and his teacher know one another well enough to be able to talk not as strangers, but with mutual confidence. This is the time to see if his right and natural desire for knowledge—which we must not ban as "curiosity," as though there were something wrong and unnatural about it—has hitherto been rightly satisfied, or if not, to do so now; and at the same time to warn against other kinds of talk or example. But whether or not there has been an earlier occasion for doing this, it ought never to be omitted when the bodily changes of adolescence are first forcing themselves into consciousness (and this, let me say in passing, is almost always earlier in the case of girls than of boys), in order to explain the meaning and reason of these changes (which, if unexplained, may cause much distress of mind), and to ensure that all understand the proper care of their bodies and the danger of misuse. To some it may seem that the proper occasion for talk of this kind is to be found in preparing children for confirmation. Unfortunately, even where this is done, it is seldom given by those who know the child best, and is apt to be vaguely hortatory, or denunciation so mysteriously worded as to be unreal and unintelligible, instead of information at once scientific and simple. We want a boy to realise what the new force of which he is conscious is; that it is essential for his full development into manhood that it should not be wasted, but must be used in growth, in activity of all kinds, and in help of his fellows. For I should like to emphasise my conviction that we make a great mistake if we treat this whole subject as one that concerns the individual only. It affects not only the individual, but the community and the race. And this the boy or girl can understand, and we have

touched a powerful motive if we can once make them feel that what they do will one day help their children, and will now help their school. You know the saying that in each of us a poet has died. At least it is true that in all but few boys or girls, in one stage of their growth, there is an idealist to which if we are wise we shall appeal, and, in my experience, seldom appeal altogether in vain.

And finally, when boy or girl comes to leave school—I speak of those who can stay on until 17 or 18—there is in many cases yet another opportunity of saying something about those problems of sex, physical, economic, and ethical, that no one can altogether escape, difficulties and dangers that will have to be faced whether in single life or in marriage. How far one should discuss these things will vary very greatly in different cases; but with most such a time is an opportunity to say something that will be helpful, if only to open the door to further discussion of such problems with any that may desire it later on.

In some such way, it seems to me, we must try to deal with this matter in the school. As with all social problems, we must attack it from two sides: from without, by the moulding force of the environment, and from within by such personal influence as we can bring to bear on the individual. We must see that the surroundings and conditions of the child's school life are such as to foster wholesome habits of life and a wholesome attitude of mind; but also we must at times—at which times we can best do so I have tried to indicate—make such personal appeal to his good sense and good feeling as will evoke most response at his then stage of development. And this, I feel, can best be done—I would almost say can only be done—not by moral lectures or inquisition, nor by books or pamphlets, but by quiet friendly talk. And in all such talk I would urge: be frank and simple, not vague and allusive; we want to allay curiosity, not to rouse it. Answer all a child's questions frankly, and as fully as he can then understand. Let him feel that this knowledge is as natural and as "scientific" as any other; but at the same time see that, if possible, it is associated with his best feelings and with the thought of something to do

for others. And lastly, if one cannot always be sure of when it is right to speak or how much to say, err if at all by speaking too soon rather than too late, and saying more rather than less than may be needed. For the danger and the prize are alike too great to be set upon a risk.

HOW THE DIFFICULTIES OF TEACHING EUGENICS IN SCHOOLS HAD BEEN MET.

By MISS FAITHFULL
(Headmistress, Cheltenham Ladies' College).

WHEN I was invited to take part in the Conference, I was asked to read a paper on "How the Difficulties of Teaching Eugenics in Schools had been met." I felt obliged to confess that, as far as I knew, these difficulties had not been met, and that I was therefore unable to speak on the subject. I now observe that this subject finds no place on the programme, so I expect that I was right in assuming that no one has successfully attempted to teach eugenics in so far as it includes a knowledge of sex-hygiene in schools.

There are, it seems to me, two ways in which the question may be approached—the direct and the indirect method—both of them beset with difficulties.

It is often said that eugenics can best be taught through natural history lessons. Does this mean that the subject is more wisely approached indirectly, hidden in analogies, or that it is so difficult of explanation and expression that it can be most easily understood if described in the terms of another science. If the former, it is open to this objection, that you are pretending to do one thing while you are really doing another, and the most ordinary result of this is a failure to do either thoroughly well. If the eugenic aim is to be deduced from the botany lesson, and this is to be the aim of the teacher, the lesson will probably fail to be a good botany lesson; in any case, it will not be one of a progressive course. If, on the other hand, the scientific aim be paramount, and the eugenic aim be subordinated, it is more than possible that the children will fail to discover the eugenic aim at all.